SPEECH OF HON. J. R. THOMSON,

OF NEW JERSEY,

In the Senate of the United States, Tuesday, February 28, 1854.

Mr. President, I had not intended to address the Senate upon the question now under consideration, and would not have departed from that intention, had not the presentation of remonstrances emanating from New Jersey, and the range the debate has taken, seemed to require from me some expression of the opinions I entertain, and the reasons for the vote I shall give in favor of the bill now upon your table.

Mr. President, no northern State acted with more promptness, decision, and boldness than New Jersey, in behalf of the compromise measures of 1850. The democratic party of that State, at the elections of 1850-'51, and '52, inscribed those measures upon their banners. They were approved by the democracy of New Jersey, while their opponents, in the great contest of 1850, declined to approve them, and commended the course of those members of Congress who opposed their adoption. The issue was thus distinctly made in New Jersey between the two parties. I need not tell you, sir, that the democratic party regained their ascendency in the State. That I am here, now addressing you, I ascribe to their triumph on that issue.

Sir, New Jersey has never been prone to any subserviency to southern or to any other *sectional* principles. She stands by *her own* principles; and they are the principles of the Constitution, and these admonish her that her true interest and welfare will be consulted by a steady adherence to the strict letter of that Constitution. It was for this reason that the democracy of New Jersey espoused so warmly the compromise measures. They saw in them protection to the reserved rights of the States and the people—a limitation upon the intermeddling intervention of Congress—and a boundary affixed to that vexatious agitation of a sectional question, at once dangerous and demoralizing; because all sectional strife is dangerous and demoralizing in a republic, since it makes the triumph of a section paramount to the triumph of a principle.

Such being the principles and views of the State which I in part represent, I should be derelict to my duty should I not avail myself of the first occasion, very briefly, to express them in this chamber, and to sustain them by my vote. The principle of this bill is not only in accordance with those measures, and therefore in accordance with the sentiments of my constituents, but independently of all such concord, it is, in my judgment, eminently just in itself. The principle of this bill is the principle of self-government, a principle which alone prompted the Declaration of Independence. Sir, it was the seminal principal of the Constitution and the government. It lies at the foundation of all our political institutions. It is the inalienable birthright of every American freeman. The recognition of this principle has been universal in our country, with the single exception of the anomaly of dictating to the people of the Territories (in some instances) their organic laws, instead of leaving them, like the rest of the people, to the exercise of their own volition. At this moment the country resounds with clamor, from a political party, whose policy is to keep alive agitation, because it is proposed that Congress should abjure the exercise of irresponsible power, and leave the people of the Territories established by this bill to the enjoyment of their rights of self-government.

By what process of reasoning, I would inquire, do we arrive at the conclusion that the citizens of the States, when they enter one of your Territories, become divested of the right of self-government? By virtue of what authority do you thus disfranchise and strip of the prerogatives of freeman the hardy and adventurous pioneer who goes forth to extend the empire of the republic? Show me the clause of the Constitution which authorizes such despotic exercise of power. Show me the clause of the Constitution which authorizes you to discriminate between the Territories of Utah and New Mexico and those to be created by this bill.

Why should restrictions be imposed on Nebraska and Kansas, to which Utah and New Mexico are not subjected? Is there any conflict between the principle and provisions of the bill establishing the Territories of Utah and New Mexico and the present bill? I have not been able to discover any. The principles of self-government, and the non-intervention of Congress in their domestic concerns, are asserted alike in both.

Well, then, if it does not conflict with the provisions of the Constitution, nor with the bills establishing the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, with what act of previous legislation does it conflict? Why, sir, it conflicts with the 8th section of the act of 1820, commonly but erroneously called the Missouri compromise—and this it proposes to repeal, as "being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States and Territories, as recognized by the legislation of 1850, commonly called the compromise measures"—it "being the true intent and meaning of the 'act of repeal' not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, or to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States."

By the Missouri act of 1820, rights and privileges were conferred on one portion of the people of the United States which were denied to another portion. This bill, Mr. President, it will be perceived, makes no such invidious distinction. But all citizens of the United States are entitled, under its provisions, to the same and equal rights. Sir, the people of the United States will never submit to any inequality in the enjoyment of political rights, nor can you constitutionally create any such inequality.

The second section of the fourth article of the Constitution provides that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens of the several States." But, Mr. President, does the act of 1820, which permits the introduction into a Territory of the United States of every species of property which a New England man may possess in New England, and denies that right to a Virginian with regard to his property in Virginia; does, I ask, *that* act conform with *that* clause in the Constitution which I have just cited? Sir, it creates the exact *inequality* the Constitution prohibits. The New Englander enjoys a right and immunity with respect to the removal, use, and disposal of his property which a Virginian does not enjoy. The Constitution says a northern man and a southern man shall have *equal* rights. The Missouri act says *they shall not*. Is this concord?

The property of the southern planter consists mainly, or in a great measure, of his slaves. The Constitution recognizes his right to this property; because, among other things, it provides for its recapture and rendition to the owner when it has escaped from one State into another. Yet this property, though thus recognized, the prohibitory clause of the Missouri act will not permit the planter to take with him into any Territory subject to the prohibition of 36° 30′ north latitude. This, too, is the only species of property excluded. The stock, the merchandize, the machinery of every section of the country are freely admitted—the peculiar property of the southern planter is alone excluded. And the convenient or inconvenient removal of this property in no degree affects the great principle involved in the right

Now, is this inequality just or constitutional? Well, sir, if not constitutional, whence is this power of exclusion, this power to create inequality, derived? Is it derived from any common consent between the people of the north and the south? Can any bargain in favor of such inequality be shown? Did the free States own exclusively the country covered by the Missouri compromise, and did they cede it to the United States, with a reservation that Congress should permit *them* to take *their* property into this region, but should prohibit the southern planter from taking *his* property into the same district?

I can trace no such history in the records of this government. The district which it is proposed to incorporate into the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska is a portion of that region which was purchased from France, and called the Louisiana purchase. It was paid for out of the common Treasury of the United States—the east, the middle, and the southern States all contributing their just proportion with which to effect the purchase. They all therefore, became joint partners, equally entitled to enter upon and enjoy these possessions.

Well, if the lands were thus acquired by purchase, and paid from the common funds of all the States, for the common benefit of the people of all, was there any special antecedent agreement which modified their use, and which gave the people of the free States any exclusive right or monopolize them? No such agreement exists. The only agreement existing between the States, solemnly acknowledged and ratified by them all, which can controll the use and disposition of these lands, was the agreement commonly called the Constitution of the United States. [Signed, sealed, and delivered, with all due solemnities, on the 17th of September, 1787.] This is the only agreement or understanding to which reference can be made to ascertain the rights and the privilege of the various parties to it. And what does this say? It delares:

"That the citizens of each State shall be entitled to equal rights and immunities with the citizens of the several States."

That was the agreement which controlled the use and disposition of these lands. But this sacred and inviolable contract was utterly disregarded by the act of 1820. And this mere *act of Congress* is *now* held to be the controlling compact, though overriding and nullifying the provisions of the Constitution.

The Constitution is overlooked or disregarded by the opponents of this bill, and the act of 1820 is made by them to take its place, and invested with all the sanctity and irrefragible character which properly belongs to that instrument alone. The act of 1820 usurps the prerogatives of the Constitution; and we are now required to recognize, tolerate, and continue this usurpation.

Mr. President, the right of Congress to make laws, excluding slavery from these Territories, I know is claimed and defended by virtue of that clause of the third section of the fourth article of the Constitution which provides that

"Congress shall have power to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property of the United States."

But who does not see that if this clause confers power to exclude slavery, on the ground that such exclusion is needful, that, on the same ground, it may be construed to confer the power to establish one form of religion in preference to another, or, in fact, to do any thing which despotic power has ever assumed to do? Such a construction would confer unlimited power, which it will hardly be maintained that Congress possesses.

But if Congress is invested with power to make rules and regulations for the Territories and other property of the United States, it seems to me, sir, that this power must be exercised in subordination to the express articles of the Constitution, and not in violation of them.

Congress may make rules and regulations, but it seems plain, sir, that these rules and regulations must be controlled by the higher authority and dignity of the Constitution.

But again: The power actually conferred on Congress is only a power to make needful rules and regulations for the territory and other *property of the United States*. But the advocates of restriction claim, by virtue of this clause, to make rules and regulations controlling the rights and use of the property of *citizens of the States*, as well as the property of the United States. The property of the United States is one thing; the property of the citizens composing the United States is quite another thing. Congress may undoubtedly authorize and direct a sale of the public lands or other *public* property of the United States in the Territories; but it will not be held that Congress can authorize the sale of the lands of the settler. Congress may also order a sale of the worthless ships of their navy, but could certainly not direct the sale of a private merchantman.

This is the distinction between the property of the United States and the property of the citizens of the United States, fairly applicable to this section.

But not only do these advocates of prohibition claim the right under this clause to make rules and regulations controlling the use of the property of the citizens of the States, but to control and restrict the property of certain States, while other property in other States is left untrammelled and uncontrolled by congressional territorial regulations.

But there is another clause of the Constitution, whose general terms may well be held to qualify or govern the third section to which I have been referring. It is this:

"And nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to *prejudice* any claims of the United States, or any particular State."

I am aware, sir, that this clause has been held to apply to claims of title to lands. But the language is general and comprehensive.

I ask, then, whether a restriction upon the removal of the property of citizens of any one State to a Territory, the common property of all the States, does not, in the language of this clause, "prejudice" the claims of those who are thus excluded? Why, sir, it not only prejudices their claims to the common use and occupation of the Territories, but it nullifies and extinguishes them. It is, indeed, a prohibition upon the prosecution of their claims.

Mr. President, this bill conflicts, it is true, with the act of 1820—nay, repeals it—and it is said, therefore, in so doing violates a sacred compact. But, sir, I deny that this act of Congress is a compact. It is a mere act of general legislation, and does not, in my opinion, by any means partake as much of the nature of a compact as an act of Congress establishing a protective tariff; for, under its inducements, millions of capital are diverted from one pursuit and invested in another. And yet, who ever heard a tariff act called a sacred compact, overruling the plain provisions of the Constitution of the United States?

For myself, sir, I have never regarded a mere act of Congress, made for special occasions, to meet a particular exigency, as having the binding obligation which some gentlemen claim for the act of 1820. Acts of general legislation cannot thus be construed. Acts of general legislation may be repealed by the power which sanctioned them. Compacts are irrepealable, except by the consent of the parties to them.

But it is said that the circumstances under which this act was passed, and the length of time it has been acquiesced in, invest it with the sanctity of an article of the Constitution; nay, more, sir; for the opponents of its repeal declare, by their opposition, that the article of the Constitution with which it conflicts shall remain a dead letter, whilst this act of general legislation shall usurp its place. And rights, too, sir, have been claimed to have been acquired under it. Rights! Mr. President; no rights can grow up under unconstitutional acts. "*Quod ab initio non valet, tractu temporis non convalescet.*" Time gives no title to wrong.

Mr. President, this doctrine of time consecrating wrong is a most immoral and dangerous doctrine; and in its being sustained by this body, I see far more danger to the institutions of our country than from the excitement which may be produced by the repeal of this unconstitutional proviso.

Declare, by your votes, that an act of Congress supersedes an article of the Constitution, and you make that instrument an object of scorn and contempt. Divest that instrument of the sanctity with which it has been regarded by the people—as the bulwark of their liberties, and their defence against power—and the name and the form of the Union may, for a while, indeed, be preserved, but the spirit will have fled, and after a short period of convulsive existence will be rent into fragments, or be converted into a government in which the Congress of the United States, like the Parliament of Great Britain, will be irresponsible and omnipotent.

Mr. President, the eighth section of the act of 1820, without any relation to the State of Missouri, prohibits slavery forever from all that part of the territory acquired by the Louisiana purchase north of 36° 30′ north latitude.

But the act with which the great name of Henry Clay has been identified, has nothing whatever to do with this restrictive section of the act of March, 1820, generally, but erroneously, called the Missouri compromise. But the act or resolution of the subsequent year introduced by Mr. Clay, March 2, 1821, may be regarded as a compact; not so the general act, containing the restrictive section of 1820.

It is of the essence of a compact that there should be two or more parties to it. Was this so of the act of 1820? Were there two parties to it? By no means, sir. There certainly was not. It was an act of Congress, and was not even accepted by Missouri. It was not, therefore, a compact between Missouri and the United States.

But admitting for the argument that it was a compact with Missouri, and that Missouri had accepted and ratified it, I ask gentlemen how far the State of Missouri could rightfully conclude the rights of the people of the United States to vast and unsettled regions outside of the geographical limits of Missouri and north of that parallel of forbidden lat tude?

But, sir, the acceptance of the "resolution providing for the admission of Missouri into the Union on a certain condition," offered by Mr. Clay, and approved on the 2d of March, 1821, did, in my judgment, constitute a compact between the United States and the State of Missouri—so far as the State of Missouri is concerned, and no further—and it was this:

Resolution providing for the admission of Missouri into the Union on a certain condition.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That Missouri shall be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States, in all respects whatever upon the fundamental condition that the fourth clause of the twenty-sixth section of the third article of the Constitution, submitted on the part of the said State to Congress, shall never be construed to authorize the passage of any law, and that no law shall be passed in conformity thereto by which any citizen of either of the States in this Union shall be excluded from the enjoyment of any of the privileges and immunities to which such citizen is entitled under the Constitution of the United States: *Provided*, That the legislature of the said State, by solemn public act, shall declare the assent of the said State to the said fundamental condition, and transmit to the President of the United States, on or before the fourth Monday in November next, an authentic copy of the said act: upon the receipt whereof the President, by proclamation, shall announce the fact; whereupon, and without any further proceedings on the part of Congress, the admission of the said State into this Union shall be considered as complete.

JOHN W. TAYLOR,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.
JOHN GAILLARD,
Speaker of the Senate pro tempore.
Approved, March 2, 1821.
JAMES MONROE.

And this fourth clause of the twenty-sixth section of the third article of the Constitution of the State of Missouri authorized the legislature to pass a law prohibiting the immigration of free negroes. This Congress refused to sanction; and the resolution of Mr. Clay was offered and adopted in Congress, submitted in due form to the people of Missouri, and acceded to by them. This, then, was a compact between the United States on the one part, and the State of Missouri on the other; and for what? to prohibit slavery forever north of 36° 30′ north latitude? No, sir. No such stimulation or provision can be there found. It provides simply that the clause to which I have referred in the Constitution of Missouri "shall never be construed to authorize the passage of any law, and that no law shall be passed in conformity thereto, by which any citizen of either of the States of this Union shall be excluded from the enjoyment of any of the privileges and immunities to which such citizen is entitled under the Constitution of the United States." And this, Mr. President, is Mr. Clay's compromise. The so-called Missouri Compromise—or solemn compact, as it is now called—was on act of general legislation, never accepted by Missouri, which it concerned, and therefore could not in law or in common sense be called a compact.

But, sir, the true object of the act of 1820 was to satisfy a temporary exigency. It was adopted with direct reference to the presidential contest of that day. It answered its purpose then. It terminated a sectional controversy which threatened the peace of the country and the stability of the Union. The motives which induced that act now justify its repeal. The repeal will accomplish *now* what that act vainly attempted. It will forever put an end to all controversy on the subject of slavery. By that repeal Congress divests itself forever of all right to intervene with reference to that subject.

And, sir, the repeal of this objectionable act, unconstitutional as it is, and conflicting as it does with the compromise measures of 1850, while it will make a uniformity and consistency in congressional legislation, in every way so desirable, while it will relieve a portion of our fellow-citizens from a condition of inequality of rights, a sense of which has chafed and galled them almost into resistance, it will have no practical effect upon the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska.

It has been well and truly said by the distinguished senator from Massachusetts, [Mr. Everett,] that "there was no great material interest in it. It is not supposed (says he) that even the Territory of Kansas is to become a slaveholding region. The climate, the soil, the staple productions, are not such as to invite the planter from the neighboring States who is disposed to remove, to turn away from the cotton region of the south, and establish himself in Kansas or Nebraska. A few domestic servants may be taken there, a few farm laborers, but in the long run everybody, I am sure, admits that Kansas is not to be a slaveholding region; and if not, certainly not the Territory north of it."

I respect, as much as any senator, every act of Congress, as *an act*, if it be constitutional, and will give it my support. But if time and circumstances, the welfare and necessities of the people, and the spirit of the age, should render necessary a modification or repeal of any act of general legislation, were it as old as the decalogue, I would not hesitate to repeal it. Time, sir, cannot consecrate injustice, or justify its perpetuation.

Mr. President, for the reasons which I have given, and endeavored to compress into as brief a space as possible, I shall deliver my vote for the bill as it is now presented to the Senate. To recapitulate, I do so:

First. Because it is strictly in accordance with the principles of self government, upon which the institutions of this republic are formed.

Second. Because it places the inhabitants of Kansas and Nebraska upon the same footing as those of Utah and New Mexico, and is in entire accordance with the principles of the compromise measures of 1850, and the legislation subsequent to it;

Third. Because it repeals an act which created inequality of rights between citizens of the different States of the Union, and is therefore a violation of the Constitution of the United States, which guaranties equal rights to the citizens of all the States; and

Fourth. Because it will banish forever from the halls of Congress all agitation on the exciting topic of slavery, and give peace and stability to the Union.

Congressional.

THIRTY-THIRD CONGRESS.

FIRST SESSION.

In Senate—Wednesday, March 8, 1854.

A number of petitions were presented, and appropriately referred.

LAND FOR RAILROADS.

Mr. SHIELDS introduced a bill granting land to the State of Iowa, to aid in the construction of a railroad therein.

Mr. CLAY introduced a bill granting land to the State of Alabama, to aid in the construction of a railroad in that State. Which bills were referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

THE WRECK OF THE SAN FRANCISCO.

Mr. SHIELDS, from the Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two houses upon the bill for the relief of the officers and soldiers of the United States army, who were on board the steamer San Francisco at the time she was wrecked; made a report which was considered and adopted.

RETIRED ARMY LIST.

On motion of Mr. SHIELDS the Senate proceeded to the consideration of the bill to promote the efficiency of the army of the United States by establishing a retired list for disabled officers; and the bill was considered and ordered to be engrossed for a third reading.

PRINTERS' ACCOUNTS.

Mr. HAMLIN reported back the joint resolution of the House providing for the settlement of the accounts of A. Boyd Hamilton, late printer to Congress; and the same being explained, was considered and passed.

LAND FOR THE INSANE.

On motion by Mr. FOOT, the Senate resumed the consideration of the bill granting land to the several States of the Union to aid in the support and maintenance of the indigent insane.

After some remarks by Messrs. ADAMS and DODGE, of Iowa, in opposition to the bill, it was considered and passed, by the following vote:

YEAS—Messrs. Badger, Bell, Brown, Chase, Clayton, Dawson, Dodge of Wisconsin, Everett, Fessenden, Fish, Foot, Geyer, Gwin, Hamlin, Houston, Jones, of Tennessee, Morton, Rusk, Seward, Shields, Stuart, Sumner, Thompson, of Kentucky, Wade, and Walker—25

NAYS—Messrs. Adams, Atchison, Butler, Cass, Clay, Dodge, of Iowa, Douglas, Fitzpatrick, Mason, Pettit, Weller and Williams.

THE VERMONT SENATOR.

On motion by Mr. PETTIT, the Senate proceeded to the consideration of the resolution declaring that the Hon. S. S. Phelps is entitled to represent the State of Vermont in the Senate of the United States.

Mr. PHELPS addressed the Senate until three o'clock in support of his claim to his seat.

After which the subject was postponed, and the Senate proceeded to the consideration of executive business,

And shortly after adjourned.

House of Representatives.

THE TARIFF.

The SPEAKER laid before the House a communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, in reply to a resolution of the 30th ultimo, furnishing a copy of the circular addressed to him to persons engaged in manufacturing and commercial pursuits, asking them for information as to the best mode of bringing the tariff within the bounds of a revenue standard; together with numerous letters received in response to the circular.

Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, and ordered to be printed.

SEABOARD IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. STRATTON presented the joint resolutions of the legislature of New Jersey, instructing the senators and requesting the representatives from that State to use their efforts to procure an appropriation of $200,000 for the improvement of the navigtion and protection of the seaboard along Sandy Hook and Cape May.

Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

COMMITTEE CLERKS.

Mr. STANTON, of Tennessee, offerred a resolution, authorizing the Committee on the Judiciary to employ a clerk, whose compensation shall be the same as that of the clerks employed by the other standing committees. He remarked that the investigation devolved upon the Committee on the Judiciary, day before yesterday, relative to the Gardiner claim, rendered it absolutely necessary that a clerk shall be employed.

Mr. STANTON, of Kentucky, offered an amendment to the resolution, likewise authorizing the select committee heretofore appointed to inquire into the propriety of military superintendents over civil works to employ a clerk.

Mr. FUALKNER said the committee had been empowered to send for persons and papers, thereby involving a great amount of labor. Without a clerk it would be utterly impossible to proceed with the business before them. The House might as well discharge the committee at once as to deny them a clerk.

The original resolution, as thus amended, was passed.

Several territorial bills were adopted and referred to the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.

MINNESOTA LAND BILL.

The House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, Mr. Phelps in the chair, and resumed the consideration of the bill granting lands to Minnesota to aid in the construction of a railroad in that territory.

Mr. BAYLY, of Virginia, remarked that he would not have opened his lips to-day but for the attack of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Campbell) yesterday, on the Virginia delegation, and on himself particularly. The gentleman charged on them that, in voting to cede the swamp and overflowed lands to the State in which they lie, and to give lands to the soldiers who have served in our different wars, they have conceded to Congress the full authority to dispose of the public lands in any manner which their unrestrained discretion may seem to point out.

The Constitution confers on Congress authority to make all needful rules and regulations in respect to the territory and other property of the United States. He was free to admit that this clause of the Constitution gives to Congress the exclusive control of the public lands and other property of the United States, but he utterly denied that it confers on Congress unlimited control of the subject.

The public lands, whether acquired by cession, by purchase, or by conquest, in either case are held by this government in trust. In the case of cession the trust is defined in the deed of cession; in that of purchase or conquest, the trust results from the character of the transaction; and in the latter two cases, no less certain than in the first, in either case, whether by grant, where the trust is defined in the deed, or by acquisition or purchase, where the trust is a resulting one, it redounds to the common benefit of the whole. Therefore, while he admitted the power of the general government to make all needful rules and regulations, they are bound to do it in subordination to the trust. They have no right to make them in disregard to the disposition of the trust.

He then proceeded to justify the voting away of the swamp lands to the States in which they lie. They were in a condition of nature, which not only rendered them valueless to the United States, but impaired the value of other property in their vicinity. In this condition of affairs, the question which presented itself was this: will we undertake to recover those lands by ditching and other means, or will we permit others to do so; the government thus benefitting by such operations. He also defended the policy of granting bounty lands to soldiers; and alluded to other matters in connexion with those subjects.

Mr. KERR did not agree with either the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. Campbell,] or the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. Bayly.] He differed in toto from the latter. He believed that the government has power to make appropriations of either land or money for purposes of internal improvements, with a view to develope the resources of the country and to promote the general prosperity. He belonged to a party which has ever insisted on this policy. He thought, however, that there was a gross violation of the trust involved in this policy, now and for some time past pursued.

He opposed the bill under consideration, and the granting of alternate sections to preferred States for railroad purposes, contending that, thereby, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, the general government was not benefitted by an increased amount of revenue. He advocated sheer justice to all the States, and insisted that they all are entitled to participate equally in the lands; and in conclusion he gave notice of the following amendment, which he proposed to offer to the bill, as follows:

"Provided, however, that the money received from the sale of the reserved sections of land shall be paid to those States which have received no lands for internal improvements, according to their representation in Congress."

Mr. SIMMONS had come to the conclusion that he ought to vote for the bill; the principles of which he argued both on the grounds of constitutionality and expediency.

Mr. LANE, of Indiana, made a personal explanation, stating the reason why he yesterday withheld the name of his friend who had informed him that a gentleman, now in this city, held a claim on six thousand acres of land, at the Lake Superior terminus, of the proposed railroad from St. Pauls to Lake Superior, and that he had disposed of one-fourth of that claim in Washington. The reason why he did not mention the name of his informant yesterday was, he wished first to see him on the subject before he gave the information. He caused a note received from Captain J. Tilton, in reply to the one from him, to be read to the following effect:

"I discover that I was mistaken in regard to the location of the claim for the land. It is situated twenty miles from the terminus of the proposed road; also, in regard to the sale of one-fourth of the whole claim or other purchases to be made by a gentleman now in this city. These are entirely prospective and contingent on future events, as the lands in the vicinity of the proposed terminus at Lake Luperior, are now held by miner titles or floats which will be either confirmed or annulled when the land surveys extend over the region."

Mr. LANE replied to a remark of Mr. Bissell, made yesterday, that he suspected the time the gentleman from Indiana desired to give the information (the name of his informant) would be after the bill shall have been defeated. His friendship for the gentleman (Mr. Bissell) was of no ordinary character; it was cemented by encountering the same hardships and sharing a common danger. He could not now be induced to say anything offensive to the gentleman, but he must be permitted to say, without intending unkindness, that he envied not the man who has the heart to entertain, much less express, such a suspicion of a gentleman, and particularly of a friend.

Mr. BISSELL replied that, at the time the remark was made, it produced an impression on the House adverse to the bill, and therefore he thought it was but right for the friends of the measure to ask for the name of the gentleman's informant. It did not appear that he (Mr. B.) was out of the way; nevertheless, if the remark was hurtful to the gentleman, he was sorry he made it, for he would not wound the feelings of any man. In time of debate, every body knows how things go in this House. He did not doubt the gentleman's intentions were honorable, and he had no disposition to say more on this subject.

After further proceedings, without acting finally upon the bill, the committee rose,

And the House adjourned.

Correspondence of the London Times.

Latest from the Seat of War.

Paris, Tuesday, *Feb.* 14.

It is announced that a telegraphic despatch has been received from Toulon, announcing the arrival at Algiers of Admiral Bruat's squadron. The passage (if the telegraph speak truth) is very quick, as the squadron only left Brest on Sunday week. It is further stated that the squadron is to take on board General Pelissieur, with a division of the African army, amounting to 12,000 men; that the squadron will then make sail for Toulon, where an English squadron and transports will meet it, and also take on board 30,000 French troops; that both squadrons, with this army of 42,000 men, proceed to the Levant, enter the Dardanelles, and disembark the troops at Silvri, near the spot which I mentioned, now four or five months ago, as likely to be selected for a point of landing, namely, Rodosto, on the sea of Marmora, and the best for the protection of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. It ought not to be forgotten for a moment that the Emperor of Russia has not ceased to concentrate his force in Little Wallachia. And everything confirms me in the belief that he is preparing to strike a terrible blow in that direction; and then, his prestige regained, and his *amour propre* satisfied, he may in his "magnanimity" terrify Turkey into treating alone with him.

The accounts from Wallachia are most deplorable. The Russian "protectors," it seems, treat the *protected* somewhat in the same fashion as the Spanish conquerers treated the Indians when they refused to work or find gold for their haughty masters. It has been already stated that the Wallachians have been obliged to do the works in which beasts of burden are usually employed, and that crowds of the peasants and farmers have fled their homes, have passed into Austria, or have crossed the Danube and joined the Turks, rather than submit to the cruel *corvee* imposed by their taskmasters. My previous letters have informed you that the inhabitants of several villages near the Danube had fled from their houses. The Russian general had ordered that women and young girls should do the work imposed on them by the troops. They refused. Cossacks were sent among them. The Cossacks were resisted by a numerous body of peasants armed only with scythes or clubs. The general, we are told, sent troops who inflicted on them "an exemplary chastisement." If we are to believe the evidence of a Wallachian gentleman, who has just arrived in Paris, who is to have an interview with the minister of foreign affairs, and who, I understand, was on or near the spot, the "exemplary chastisement" was nothing less than the massacre of the women and children of three villages in the neighborhood of Giurgevo.

I have already mentioned the receipt of accounts from Constantinople, to the effect that the moment it was known that the English and French squadrons had returned to the Bosphorus, a division of the Russian fleet darted out, and proceeded to attack Fort St. Nicholas, (Chefketil,) which had been taken by the Turks; but that the Russians were repulsed. The letters add, that the news caused the greatest sensation at Constantinople; that a conference was held by the admirals and ambassadors, and that it was then determined that cruisers should be permanently kept in the Black sea, to prevent the repetition of a similar event; that several steamers had already quitted the Bosphorus for the Black sea, and that so soon as the Turkish convoy for Batoum was ready—probably on the 2d instant—a steam squadron would accompany and protect it from attack. I am informed that the French government have not as yet received any official confirmation of the attack on the fort, but that in the event of any hostile act being committed on the coast of Turkey, the minister of foreign affairs has announced the determination of the government to take a terrible revenge.

The French squadron has been reinforced by the Vaubon, which reached Beicos bay on the 26th. The Marengo, eighty guns, is on her way also to join the fleets; and the Napoleon, now undergoing repairs, will be ready for service about the end of the present month. It is stated that Admiral Hamelin's conduct in returning to the Bosphorus has also been approved by his government, notwithstanding the disapproval of the ambassador at Constantinople, the reasons for that step being of such a kind as professional men only can be the best judges. It is said here that the French admiral did not consider the risk to be so great as anticipated by his colleague, and that he would have encountered it, not at anchor in Sinope bay, but at sea. However this may be, the unpleasant feeling at Constantinople occasioned by the return of the fleets soon calmed, when it was seen that measures were being taken by the allied admirals to escort the Turkish convoy to Batoum, and to watch closely the appearance of the Russian flag in the Black sea. The same letters from Constantinople say that the nomination of Riza Pasha to the post of war minister, was of no political meaning, the government being still determined to make no concession to Russia incompatible with the dignity and interests of the Ottoman empire. It was considered likely that Mehemet Ali would be appointed to the post of minister of marine, which he has more than once held, so that the whole affair would be nothing more than an exchange of portfolios between him and Riza Pasha.

General Intelligence.

The Explosion at Hartford.—The boiler which exploded at Hartford was built with great care, of the best materials, with steam guage, &c. It was considered to be a perfect thing. It was five feet in diameter, twenty-four long, and full of flues. Its power was fifty horse. It was said that the engineer was filling his boiler with water when the accident occurred. Nearly all who were in the blacksmith's shop were killed. The entire loss in property will not exceed $12,000. Of the eighteen killed, seventeen leave families. Twenty-two persons have either limbs broken, or are badly bruised or scalded.

"The west end of the building was reduced to ruins. The boiler lay scattered about, torn in shreds, as if it had been mere paper. The main building of the factory was in size 200 by 60 feet; to which an addition had been made of 55 by 24 feet, this standing just west of the boiler, and is badly shattered. Then running south of the main building, and directly opposite the boiler was the blacksmith shop, 80 by 40 feet, and a paint shop 100 by 50 feet. Between the blacksmith shop and the boiler room there was a brick wall of eighteen inches, the boiler standing within two or three feet of this wall, and the old boiler resting upon its old bed a few feet from that. The boiler lay east and west, and the force of the explosion was mostly from its sides, gushing out north and south, tearing down the machine shop on the north, and, miraculous as it would appear, killing no one in it. On the north was the blacksmith shop, and this was razed to the ground. The whole building, of 80 by 40 feet, was shivered to atoms, carrying away the solid brick wall that separated it from the boiler, and also that which stood between it and the paint shop. Here was the great destruction of life."

Escape of Rufus Chapin.—The Cincinnati *Times*, which appears to have a very intimate knowledge of all the circumstances connected with this affair, gives the following particulars of the escape of one of the Martha Washington conspirators:

"It will be recollected that when the Martha Washington prisoners were arrested on the warrant from the governor of Arkansas, Rufus Chapin was lying sick at the Walnut street House. A guard was put over him, and it was the intention to also remove him to Helena, whenever it should be found that he was able to travel.

"How vigilant this guard was proves itself in the fact that, night before last Rufus left his room, and has not since been seen by the police.

"We learn that he passed through the office of the hotel, where quite a number of persons were as usual seated, and that he attracted no particular attention. This implies that he was pretty well disguised. From a pretty authentic source, we learn that his hair and his whiskers were dyed, and that his clothes were cut in the *travelling* fashion.

"He immediately entered a carriage in waiting, and was driven a distance of forty five miles before daylight, to a point where he took the express train, and is by this time on the shore of the Atlantic. What part of Europe or South America may be his future home, does not concern us

"We learn the drive was a little too much for the noble horse which carried him, and that he departed this life a short time after the point was won.

"Rufus is the youngest of the Chapins, and more of the sympathy of the public has been manifested for him and his interesting lady, than any other of the defendants. Whether guilty or innocent, he has played an adroit trick, which will save him considerable trouble."

Suspicions of Privateering.—The New York *Times* of Saturday says that it is informed that "an unusual number of vessels are fitting out at New York and Baltimore, destined, according to the explanation of some of the parties concerned, for the Danish West Indies. The entire fleet is reckoned at twelve or thirteen sail, manned chiefly, if not altogether, by Danish and Swedish crews." On this the *Times* remarks:

"It may be that the regular trade to the Islands of St. Thomas and Santa Cruz has made a sudden demand for this draft upon our shipping, and we shall be glad to know, in the sequel, that the discussion of the object is altogether uncalled for. But the time selected, and the rather extraordinary choice made of a certain class of seamen, to say nothing of the obscure and out-of-the-way sources from which the money is said to come for fitting out these vessels, certainly justify a public reference to the subject. That English property on the high seas, *conductas* of gold and silver especially, *en route* from the West Indies to Southampton, might be subject to aggression off the Danish islands, from Russian letters of marque, is not probable, in the immediate attitude of the Eastern war; but the time may be near at hand, when the relations between the two powers would justify the suspicion that an adventure of the sort, in the desperate spirit of privateering, might be attempted."

So far as the *Times'* information points to Baltimore, we are quite sure it is unfounded. We have heard of no unusual movement among the shipping here.—*American.*

Further from the Japan Squadron.—The Norfolk *Herald* has correspondence from Hong Kong of December 10, from which we extract the following:

"The United States steamship Powhattan arrived here on the 3d instant, from Canton, after touching at Macao—all well. The Powhattan, while at Whampoa, was visited by all the Americans and foreigners about Canton, who expressed admiration of the noble steamer. She is in fine condition, and ready for any emergency. Her clipper and warlike appearance, which will compare with that of any steamer afloat, excited their highest admiration.

On the 3d instant, about 5 p.m., the ship Jamestown, of New York, was found to be on fire in her main hold, about the main hatch, from the combustion of coal. So soon as the alarm was given, Captain Moore made it known to the commanders of the Powhatan and Susquehanna, and in a little while their small engines were sent on board, and acted like a charm, the fire being completely extinguished in about an hour and a half, and a fine ship of 1,500 tons (formerly one of the Liverpool liners) saved from destruction. The coal, which was brought from the island of Laboan, Borneo, is said to be very inflammable, particularly in a wet state, and hence its liability to spontaneous combustion.

Loss of Ship Mary T. Starrett.—The new ship Mary T. Starrett, Captain Crockett, of Rockland, from New York to Havre, was abandoned on the 1st of February, when in latitude 45 N., longitude 37 W., with loss of all her sails, foremast and rudder, very leaky, and half of her cargo thrown overboard. The crew were taken off by the packet ship Westmoreland, which scuttled the ship to get her out of the way of other vessels.

The Mary T. Starrett was built in Rockland, Maine, in 1853. She was a fine vessel of 624 tons. She cleared at New York, on the 9th of January, with 4,321 barrels of flour, 15,717 bushels wheat, 4,411 bushels rye, and 5,000 staves. The cargo was valued at about $55,000, and the ship about $45,000. The vessel supposed insured principally at the Eastward; the cargo in New York.

Maine Ship-building for the Year 1853.—We have been able to procure statistics of the vessels built in the thirteen several districts in this State during the year 1853, with the exception of one district, that of Kennebunk. We publish all together, and the shipbuilders of Maine may with pride revert to the exhibit of their year's operations. Never before has the great industry of Maine shown such wonderful results. Leaving out the 95ths, and calling the tonnage built in Kennebunk 8,000 tons, (in 1851 it was 6,000 tons,) we find the amount built in 1853 to be 165,406, (*one hundred and sixty-five thousand four hundred and six tons!*) For the year ending June 30, 1852, (the latest date to which the government statistics have been published,) the State built 110,047 tons, which was larger than the build of any previous year. So it will be seen that the increase over the build of any previous year is 55,359 tons. The reader, though he may be astonished to see the amount of tons built, will hardly be able to credit the estimation of their value. It will be seen that most of this tonnage is in ships. A fair average for double-decked vessels ready for sea is $55 per ton. Much higher prices have been paid, but it has been where the charter was to be conveyed with the vessel. But call the average value of this tonnage $55, and we have as the value of the product of this single branch of our industry, the sum of $9,097,330, (*nine millions ninety-seven thousand three hundred and thirty dollars.*)

The whole tonnage built in the United States for the year ending June 30, 1852, was 351,493 tons. Of this amount there were 269 steamers, and 267 sloops and canal-boats, not sea-going tonnage, and comprising a large amount of the tonnage built.

The following table will show the tonnage built in the United States for the year indicated, including steamers and tonnage not sea-going, of which Maine builds comparatively none:

In 1845	the amount was	145,018 tons.
1846	"	188,203 "
1847	"	243,732 "
1848	"	318,075 "
1849	"	256,577 "
1850	"	272,218 "
1851	"	298,203 "
1852	"	351,493 "

The above table is for the fiscal year of the government, from July 1st to June 30 of each year.

The following table will show the denomination of the vessels built in this State during the years indicated:

	Ships.	Brigs.	Schooners.
1850, ending June 30,	127	75	115
1851, " "	102	45	94
1852, " "	138	63	148
1853, " Dec. 31,	146	77	110

The comparative amount of *tonnage* in ships built during the last year is much greater, as the ships have been larger than those during previous years. In the government year of 1850 we built in Maine 91,211 tons; in 1851, 77,388 tons; in 1852, 110,047 tons.

[*Belfast* (*Me.*) *Journal.*

From the St. Louis Republican.

Epitaph.

On "Charley," a horse, who died [universally lamented] December 25th, 1853, aged 23 years.

Here lies a faithful steed,
A staunch, uncompromising "Silver Gray,"
Who ran the race of life with sprightly speed,
Yet never ran—away.

Bright were his eyes, yet soft,
And "In the main" his tail was white and flowing,
And though he never sketched a single draught,
He showed some taste for *drawing!*

His limbs were smooth and clean,
Fitted alike for buggy or for dray;
And, (like Napoleon the Great, I ween,)
He had a martial neigh!

No light or trifling word,
Nor empty bombast from his lips would swell;
For, save some quiet horse-laugh, chuckling heard,
His tongue was *bridled* well!

Wild oats he never sowed,
Yet masticated tame ones with much zest;
Then, cheerfully, bore each light allotted load—
As cheerfully took rest.

Full oft he lay secure,
Installed within his stall so warm and fair,
Slow-ruminating, dignified, demure,
With such a *stable* air!

With here and there a speck
Of roan, diversifying his white back,
And martyr-like, a halter round his neck,
Which bound him to the rack!

Mortal he was—at length
The hey-day* of his life was damped by death,
So, mustering all his once load-moving strength,
He *drew*—his final breath!

*Should not that first syllable be spelled "HAY?"—*Printer' Devil.*